

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5117

As Passed House:
April 5, 2011

Title: An act relating to the population restrictions for a geographic area to qualify as a rural public hospital district.

Brief Description: Concerning the population restrictions for a geographic area to qualify as a rural public hospital district.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Ranker, Stevens and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 3/9/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/5/11, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the city population limit in the definition of a rural public hospital district from 30,000 to 50,000 persons.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Takko, Chair; Tharinger, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Asay, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Rodne, Smith, Springer and Upthegrove.

Staff: Miranda Leskinen (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Public hospital districts are community-created, publicly owned municipal corporations authorized by the state to provide hospital and health care services, such as acute, outpatient, rehabilitative, and nursing home care. A public hospital district may be countywide or include area from one or more counties within its boundaries. However, the boundaries of the district must follow existing precinct boundaries and may not divide a voting precinct.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Each district is governed by a board of elected commissioners serving six-year staggered terms of office.

A rural hospital district is defined as a public hospital district that does not include a city with a population of more than 30,000 persons.

Rural public hospital districts, in addition to having all the powers and duties of other public hospital districts, may enter into cooperative agreements and contracts with other rural public hospital districts to meet district needs. These agreements and contracts may include the following:

- health care services allocations among district-owned and operated facilities;
- medical equipment and technologies allocations and combined purchases;
- health care services delivery and payment with public and private entities; and
- other cooperative arrangements.

Summary of Bill:

The city population limit used to qualify a public hospital district as a rural public hospital district is increased from 30,000 to 50,000 persons.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Skagit Valley Hospital, located in Mount Vernon, is a regional community hospital that engages in necessary, innovative, and collaborative work. Census data, however, shows that the population of the City of Mount Vernon has surpassed 30,000 people, which would disqualify Skagit Valley Hospital from being considered a rural public hospital district. For this reason, the population limit within the definition of a rural public hospital district needs to change to allow rural public hospital districts to continue to work collaboratively to meet their district needs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; and Ben Linderngel, Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.